

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

In the NT we find three principle lists of Spiritual gifts (charismaton)

- a) 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Nine power gifts – “phanerosis” in Greek
- b) Ephesians 4:11-13 Five ministry gifts, “diakonian” in Greek
- c) Romans 12:6-8. Seven “working” gifts – “energematōn” in Greek

The key to these three Greek words, is found in **1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

“There are different kinds of gifts (charismaton), but the same spirit. There are different kinds of ministry (diakonia) but the same Lord. There are different kinds of workings (energema), but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation (phanerosis) of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

The 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 list (power gifts) : word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophesy, discernment of spirits, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues.

Paul’s contextual emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12 is that these power manifestations are not demonic, rather each of these is from the same Holy Spirit of God. Spirituality at the time of Paul’s writing included a lot of supernatural demonic manifestations and the new believers were nervous about opening themselves up to the supernatural. Paul allays these fears. (1 Corinthians 12:1-3).

“Now about spiritual gifts brother I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I tell you, no-one who is speaking by the Spirit of God can say, “Jesus be cursed”, and no-one can say, “Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.”

The Ephesians 4:11-13 list (ministry gifts): Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. It is sometimes argued these are church offices rather than spiritual gifts, but that seems to be splitting hairs.

The contextual emphasis in Ephesians 4 is that these five ministry gifts are, “...to prepare God’s people for works of service (ministry) so that the body of Christ may be built up...”

The Romans 12:6-8 list (Working gifts): prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, showing mercy.

The contextual emphasis in the Romans 12 list is finding God’s will for your life and recognising that the abilities and giftedness within you will enable you to

live and work for the glory of God, the extension of His kingdom and for your own personal satisfaction.

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is God's will (for you) – His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Paul writes that these motivational gifts in particular are for **everyone** ("pasin" – Greek), not just Christians. 1 Corinthians 12:7 6 *"There are different kinds of working (energematōn) but the same God works all of them in **everyone.**"*

This should not surprise us. Human beings are created in the image of God. All have God given gifts and abilities. The difference the Holy Spirit makes within a person is to enhance their giftedness through a renewal of the heart and mind.

For example, some people are born with a prophetic "energy"; an ability to see black and white, right and wrong, justice and injustice, and they are quick and able to speak out and address those issues, whether it be in their family, in their workplace or in the church vestry meeting, or even if they are asked to teach, or even prophesy. Their teaching and prophesying will be direct; this is right, that is wrong.

The person with a mercy energy (working gift) will feel the pain of others, will empathise and be very gentle, championing the poor and downtrodden. They will tend to choose careers such as in healthcare. And even if they teach or prophesy church or are on the vestry, the priority of mercy will come through!

Look carefully at the seven "working" gifts. Prophecy (speaking out), service (helping in practical ways), teaching (explaining how to do things), encouraging (helping people be whole), giving (good at earning and generous in giving), leadership (governance and management), showing mercy (a desire to alleviate physical and emotional pain). Can you identify with one of them above the other? If so, you will be able to understand more clearly what your gifting and calling is. Not just in the church, but your life in general.

Finally, I want to say that the categories and lists of gifts Paul notes down, I do not believe are exhaustive. I have no doubt that musical ability fits into all three of the gifts categories.

When Moses complained to God he had no way of convincing Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go, God said, "What is it you have in your hand?"

What is it you have in your hand that you can allow the Holy Spirit to empower and inspire and use for the glory of God, the extension of His kingdom, and your own deep satisfaction?